Farm Women: An overview of the literature in a UK context.

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Topic: Farming is a heavily gendered environment. In this review paper we introduce, theorise and discuss the triadic research themes of 'Women Farmers', 'Farmers Wives' and 'Farm Women' as an under researched social status group and resource. The term farm women include 'farmers' mothers and daughters' and the 'wives and daughters of farm workers' but also 'migrant workers' whom are under-represented in the literature. Increasingly, women make up a considerable proportion of agricultural students and the land-based workforce. Such women and particularly women farmers have a marginalised voice in existing formal discourse. Indeed, little is written about women farmers in either the rural entrepreneurship literature or the entrepreneurship and gender literature with the limited exception of asking questions and attempting to answer questions about the role of household and off farm work. There are studies in the agricultural literature but there is an identifiable research gap relating to what they do and how they do it and more importantly their official status. Historically farm women in the wider context often received limited or no formal management skill or training or an agricultural education, but this is changing. Consequentially, this educational transition is of interest within the wider context of women being considered as an under recognised and under-valued resource worthy of further research.

Aim: The overall aim of this review is to interrogate the extant literature to develop a more nuanced understanding of the sectors in which such farm women work and to explore why they have such a marginalised profile and voice in formal discourse. The key aims are to:

- Understand why women farmers are under-represented in official statistics.
- Explore and provide a more nuanced understanding of women farmers and what they do.
- Identify the specific structural and social barriers that may be associated with, or inhibit, the enterprise development of women farmers.
- Explore other gendered roles such as 'Farmers Wives' and 'Farm Women in general.

Methodology: This review paper utilises a Systematic Review Methodology to identify key academic studies relating to the roles of women in farming and to synthesise studies from a diverse range of literatures to provide an overview. Its purpose is to identify what is known and to identify research gaps for future research and to develop a clearer conceptual understanding of the topic. To provide a genuine overview documentary research methodology is also employed to evidence the protean nature of available material on 'Women Farmers' not yet commented upon in the academic literature. The review develops critical questions about woman farmers, farmers wives and farm women in general that can inform future empirical

work. We restrict the geographic element of the review to a UK context to explore the numbers of women farmers and the sectors within which they operate. We seek to identify "typical" experiences of the barriers facing women farmers and to establish if they provide the entrepreneurial energy to create localised change.

Contribution: There is a substantial but under-appreciated literature about women in farming spread across a diverse range of literature. Much of the literature is dated and it occurs in cycles. As such, it is not a mainstream literature and it generally mirrors the findings of the female entrepreneurship literature relating to the marginalisation and invisibility of the women farmer, farmers wives and the wider population of farm women whether they be farmers' daughters and mothers, the wives of farm workers or itinerant migrant workers. In particular, there are obvious gender-based barriers to women in farming and land-based industries and these relate to structural and social pathways into farming. Women are still seen in the literature as an unpaid resource or as companions to their men. Yet, there is a stream of literature which suggests that women farmers are generally more entrepreneurial than men and contemporary data from the grey literature suggests they are an emergent force in the sector.

Practical implications: This review explores the extant literature on women in farming to identify research streams and themes with a view to informing future empirical research studies to explore why women are under-represented in the contemporary literature and whether women's enterprise skills in the farming context are perhaps more nuanced than their masculine counterparts. This review contributes by providing a base from which to begin separating rhetoric from reality and by generating a list of critical questions to guide future research. The paper is an initial stage in a larger study ongoing empirical study.

Introduction.

Traditionally, and historically women have played a significant role in farming but paradoxically have not featured so much in the academic literature (McElwee, 2006). This is perhaps because of the fact that farming has been socially constructed in Western society as a masculine, patriarchal and malestream construct (Whatmore, 1991 a & b; Saugeres 2002a and b; Charatsari, 2014). Indeed, the stereotypically heroic representations of the farmer is that of the 'strong', 'rugged' man who stoically farms the land and provides for self and family in a perpetual cycle of work (Whatmore, 1991b). From a sociological perspective this stereotype is accentuated by the patriarchal nature of both society and farming and by the societal mechanism of 'primogeniture' whereby farming is associated with 'land ownership' [or at the very least of stewardship] and the tradition whereby the first born male sibling inherits the family farm. The second and third sons of farmers are left to find their own way in life. In previous generations little consideration [if any] was given in the literature to the daughters of farmers or to the existence of 'Women Farmers', for that matter. Some women from a farming background themselves bring land and capital to a marriage with a farmer (Gasson, 1992). Kalmijn (1991) in a study on homogamy, positions that historically marriage has been used to bind families of similar origin or status together e.g. religion, or both families from a farming background termed as intrinsic homogamy. However other studies suggest that homogamy reduces in successive birth cohorts over time (Smits et al. 1999). Endogamy, i.e. the custom of marrying within the constraints of a local community, clan, or tribe is recognised as a global phenomenon within farming communities and can be influenced by spatial isolation and social control (Pélissier et al. 2005; Van Leeuwen et al. 2005). Because farms are traditionally passed down to sons from generation to generation to the first born second and third sons of farming families are encouraged to marry within the farming community because women from farming

backgrounds have been socialised into the role and demands of the job more than non-farming women (Bomel, 2006).

This article is a review paper which utilises a 'Systematic Review Methodology' to identify key academic studies relating to the roles of women in farming and to synthesise studies from a diverse range of literatures to provide an overview. Its purpose is to identify what is known and to identify research gaps for future research and to develop a clearer conceptual understanding of the topic. To provide a genuine overview documentary research methodology (Scott, 2014) is also employed to evidence the protean nature of available material on 'Women Farmers' not yet commented upon in the academic literature. This entails also examining official reports and newspaper and media articles on the phenomenon. The review develops critical questions about woman farmers, farmers wives and farm women in general that can inform future empirical work. We restrict the geographic element of the review to a UK context to explore the numbers of women farmers and the sectors within which they operate. We seek to identify "typical" experiences of the barriers facing women farmers and to establish if they provide the entrepreneurial energy to create localised change. This overview of the literature is important because within the last decade, any researcher wishing to write about 'Women Farmers' would not have found much encouragement in the literature, nor much empirical evidence to support their thesis. Yet, in reality women play an important part in farming and have a significant 'voice' and 'say' in the every-day decision making in the industry. During the last ten years this 'outdated' position has changed significantly. There are a number of obvious factors at play in the potential paradox between the discourse in the literature and practice. These include cultural, historical, legislative and gender related factors.

In this overview, we conduct a systematic literature review to map and provide an overview of changing empirical reality and evolving literature by examining the traditional and contemporary roles played by farm women. In doing so we synthesise a tentative literature and flesh out the context associated with the contemporary roles played by women in the industry. In this (over)review we concentrate on the 'UK' and 'Westernised' models of farming because we are aware that farming even in a wider European and developing world context is often differently socially constructed.[1] In western countries and in much of the world, women are less likely to own farmland in their own right. Byrne et al. (2014) report that in Europe, one in four agricultural holders is a woman, rising to one in three in Baltic countries (Eurostat, 2009) and women's share of farmland overall is smaller because they typically own smaller holdings (European Commission, 2012). For example, Hansson et al. (2013) in their study of Swedish farmers, take the farm family as their unit of analysis and do not comment on women farmers exclusively. Cush et al. (2018) in their work on Irish farms discuss the opportunities for women to become involved in joint decision-making processes in joint farming ventures. However, women are represented in faster growing value-added agricultural markets such as organic, local, and direct to consumer (Brandth and Haugen 2011; Ball, 2020). Agriculture in the UK is divisible into seven main categories: arable, beef and sheep, dairy, horticulture, pigs and

[1] Indeed, much of the literature on farm women is conducted into women in Africa, India and other cultural contexts where the structure of farming is culturally different.

organic farming. The nature of the farming is largely determined by regional variations in factors such as climate, soil type and accessibility of resources and markets (Bomel, 2006). These factors influence gendered permutations of farming stereotypes. In addition, certain landbased industries connected to farming such as the equestrian industry, horticulture and dairy farming have a higher number of women in them than men. Collectively, the agricultural workforce has been described as the 'farming family' (Melberg, 2003). Melberg highlighted that as farming families' work and family roles are so intertwined, lines between work, family, duties and relaxation are vague. Most farms [and here we differentiate between farms and more formal agri-business] have more than one generation of the same family working them. Family as a unit of analysis is a fascinating aspect of this literature because in the hierarchy of farming, a farmer's wife, sons and daughters enjoy managerial ascendency and status over managers and workers, irrespective of their title of position in the farm business (McElwee and Smith, 2012; De Rosa, McElwee and Smith, 2019). Indeed, it could be argued that they are considered to be farmers by proxy or as an extension of their 'masters voice' or indeed that whilst the farmer is male, he represents a 'collective family voice.'

This raises some interesting questions - for example, why are there so few women farmers registered in some countries and more in others and why is there a preponderance of women farmers in some agricultural sectors and less in others. For example, in Norway only 14% of farm holdings are managed by women (Heggem, 2014). By registered holdings, we mean where the legal status of the "registered" farmer resides is the woman. This of course can be misleading. For example, a farm managed by a woman, may actually be registered in the name of a company, sometimes a multinational, or a farm registered in the name of a man may well be managed by a woman. So, the name of the person responsible for the holding, or indeed the age of the person in this position tells us little about the leadership and managerial activities within a given farming operation. This means it is too simplistic to merely consider women farmers as those who are formally registered as farmers.

There is a difference in career path between the women farmer as owner/occupier, partner or tenant (family route to farming) and the woman farmer as CEO/farm manager of a farming business. This career path may influence the resources available to a women to farm so we start by considering what the definition of a farmer is? This aspect of the literature is fascinating and begs the questions of - why there are so few registered holdings are in the name of women? How many are they and who they are? Additionally, why are there so few registered in some countries and more in others and why is there a preponderance of women farmers in some sectors and less in others. It is also necessary to consider what are the sectors are that women farmers work in including added value activities, agri-tourism, equestrian, horticulture, dairy, livestock etc. It is now incumbent upon us to consider the definitions of the farmer and the context in which they operate.

Defining the farmer and the context of farming.

The most basic definition of a farmer is – "a person who owns or manages a farm" or "a person who operates a **farm** or cultivates land". From a tax viewpoint, farming is producing food from the land so we must consider the linkages between farming and non-farming enterprises or whether the enterprises add value in some way to existing farming businesses or utilise

redundant resources more effectively. These definitions are theoretically agendered but to appreciate the historical origins of the word one must go back to its linguistic roots. The word is derived from late Middle English and stems from the old French word '*fermier*', borrowed from medieval Latin *firmarius*, *firmator*, or from *firma* (farm). The earliest usage of the term farmer originally denoted a bailiff or steward who farmed land on the owner's behalf, or a tenant farmer. One can thus see that it is steeped in the ideology of ownership and of the land. The unit of measurement is thus tied to ownership or superintendence of land.

Gasson and Errington (1993) argue that the farm family business consists of six elements:

- Business ownership is combined with managerial control in the hands of business principals.
- These principals are related by kinship or marriage as previously described perpetuated by homogamy and endogamy.
- Family members (including these business principals) provide capital to the business.
- Family members including business principals do farm work.
- Business ownership and managerial control are transferred between the generations with the passage of time, and
- The family lives on the farm.

This definition does not incorporate farm businesses and companies which operate from industrial estates or non-farming land. Another problematic issue is that over time the ownership of land in the UK has become associated with social class and because of this there is no one such overarching type of farmer. Instead, there is a typology. At the lower end of the typology there are smallholders or crofters who either own or rent their land to small scale farmers. At the other end of the scale, one has the gentleman farmer, the squirearchy, the landed gentry and the aristocratic landowners (see Thompson, 2001 and Grant, 2020 for a typology of such rentiers; and Grant and Smith, 2020: Accepted for a detailed discussion of entrepreneurial land management). Each type has a different set of values, albeit all are rooted in stewardship of the land. In addition, there are corporate companies who invest in farms for either operational purposes or for investment purposes. Such companies employ farm managers and factors who manage the land, as do some aristocratic landowners. For the corporate and aristocratic landowners, often the primary concern is the pursuit of profit and return on capital, not stewardship of the land (Grant, 2020). Moreover, farm managers are an important element in the typology because they are often university educated, act autonomously and are paid substantial salaries (relative to industry norms). It is a complex affair because there are some farm managers who are managers in name only, because they do not have autonomy of action which rests with the farmer or landowner. This is important because autonomy of action is an essential element in farming and in entrepreneurship. Also, one has to consider land ownership because a tenant farmer, small holder or crofter does not own the land and cannot use it as security to borrow capital to expand. Tenant farmers do not have the same social status as those who own their own land and assets. There are numerous types of holding, some more prevalent in different countries, including – Leasehold and Co-operative.

As well as the differential in social status, the size of the farm and its geographic location does matter considerably too. Arable farms in lowland locations close to transport infrastructures and markets are more lucrative than 'hill farms' in inaccessible, remote areas. In a given business context, as the cost structure of farming becomes increasingly strained, a farmer may choose to reground (mobilise resources including drive economies of scale), deepen (seek to add value to commodities and create market opportunities) and/or broaden (through diversifying into other rural enterprises) see Meraner et al. (2015). This places a considerable strain on family finances as farms, smallholders and crofters are required to engage in entrepreneurial, pluriactivy and diversification strategies to make a living and support a family, often in addition to having a second career via a partner who works off the farm (McElwee and Smith, 2012). The working philosophy and ethos of farming in this situation is guided by masculine ideology, masculine work identity and symbolism (Brandth and Haugen, 2011), and the ambition of many elite farmers to expand their operations to drive profitability and provide suitable inheritance for their children. For the majority the business plan was to subsist and survive to enable them to pass their farm down to their children. This expansive scaling is exacerbated by the fact that land ownership in the UK is a finite asset and land prices are inflated as a result compared to the financial return. There is stiff competition for land and vacant farms and many farmers do not get the opportunity to purchase land within travelling distance of their own farm. Renting extra land is often the only viable option to expand. However, some of these new business structures are rejected by male farmers because they have to relinquish dominant decision-making power on their farms (Cush and Macken-Walsh, 2018). Further a sense of loss or failure to live up to these masculine ideals of strength, stoicism, endurance is linked to severe mental health issues with many male farmers (Kunde et al. 2018; Perceval et al. 2019) a real cause for concern

However, the most significant factor to impact on the 'Women Farmer' is the patriarchal system of land ownership in which traditionally the man was the head of the family and legal owner of land and property. Thus, irrespective of who farmed the land it was usually legally owned by the patriarch. This more than any other factor accounted historically for the lack of 'Women Farmers' in the official statistics. In bygone days, women often only became accepted as farmers when their husbands died and they took over the running of the farm, or if they inherited it from their fathers due to the lack of a credible male heir. Otherwise women had to perform socially accepted roles in the social community. We will return to this in the review/overview section.

An overview of the literature and development of a typology.

Although research into the role of women in farming is sparse, it has been undertaken on a cyclical basis from the 1970s onwards. Initial research (Gasson, 1981, 1992; Gasson et al, 1988, Shorthall 2002 a-e) tended to focus on farmer's wives or the farm household, but not on women farmers. So, there is a definite research lacuna. The cyclical nature of the research every generation has a tendency to repeat the same questions, without answering them. There is a healthy literature on the role of women in agriculture in developing countries and also a considerable body of work on American farm Women from a historical perspective. Little has been written about women farmers in developed economies (Annes and Wright, 2016; Sachs

et al. 2016; Stenbacka, 2017; Wright and Annes, 2016; Whitley & Brasier, 2020) and their empowerment potential. Another issue is the masculinization of land management and the associated discourses that arise in business management of gender and competence (Pesonen et al. 2009), business literature where the text is "men talking to men" and also silence i.e. the failure to articulate the role of women is an important element of this nuanced discourse (Brandth & Haugen, 1998). In one study women in agri-business describe having to "mimic men," become "honorary men" and a presumption of the masculine (Martin et al. 2018).

Indeed, the literature privileges the hegemony of the male farmer (Oldrup, 1999; Shorthall, 2010). One of the traditional perennial themes in the literature is that it is the male farmer who runs the farm and of that the female is therefore not a decision maker. This positions the women very much in the domestic sphere. This viewpoint is changing rapidly (Albright, 2006). Pini (2005), drawing on feminist post-structural theory explored the construction of gendered identities in on-farm physical work focussing on the strategy's farm women engage to negotiate their gendered subject positions while undertaking a role typically defined as "men's work". Pini's respondents adopted a discursive strategy allowing them to claim both a feminine subjectivity and involvement in tractor work. Pini referred to this as the adoption of a "farm as business" discourse which reconstitutes the "farm" as a "business" and the "farmer" and "farm wife" as "business partners". Nevertheless, Pini argued that in reality this is a difficult position for women to achieve. Across Europe more and more farm families start new income generating activities on and off the farm to supplement the decreasing income from primary productions (Bock, 2004). Indeed, farmwomen play an important role in these strategies but are at the same time perceived as somewhat 'less' professional entrepreneurs in comparison to men perhaps due to their cautious and small-scaled approach to entrepreneurship. Bock argues that for farm women it is all about fitting in and multi-tasking. She also stipulates that rural development policies are of little help to women because they promote a type of entrepreneur and an approach to entrepreneurship most common among men.

Much that is written tends to ask questions and/or attempts to answer questions about the role of women in the household and their interaction with off farm work (see Bell, 2020). But there is less research about what they do and how they do it and more importantly why there are so few women farmers in some countries and more in others. The research reports on the invisibility of women in farming and farming discourse (Sachs, 1983; Brandth and Haugen, 1998; Martin et al. 2017) and also highlights the role of farm wives in supporting their husbands at work and by taking care of family and home (Brandth, 2019). This is in line with the early research into the role of 'entrepreneurs' wives' (Smith and Warren, 2020). Oldrup (1999) articulated that many farm women in Denmark were from a non-farming background and lacked a formal farming education and background. Oldrup suggested that in reality farm women were knowledgeable actors for whom living on a farm poses specific dilemmas because they individually have to reconcile practices on the farm with norms and practices they bring with them from their earlier experiences and with norms associated with gender relations more generally in society.

Another theme is that of the family unit (Gasson, et al, 1998; Errington and Gasson, 1993). Indeed, the Bomel report (2006) stresses the importance of the family unit and of family whereby farming families' work and family roles are intertwined and lines between work, family, duties and relaxation are vague and often blurred (See also Smith 2012 for a discussion

of the matriarchal role played by wives). This is an important point because many farm women are from farming families or were 'Farm Raised Children' (Smith, 2012) and as such they are socialised into the life. Most family farms in Europe cannot function without external sources of income and thus agricultural women have to take on outside/off-farm employment (Kelly and Shortall, 2002; Brandth, 2019). Kelly and Shortall (2002) suggest that women's off-farm work is rarely individually motivated, but as a means of keeping the farm running. Women's work roles on the farm are shaped by gendered expectations and Alston (1998) believes gender roles present in the farming family shapes men and women's labour roles. Whatmore (1991) highlights that farm women experience work is characterised by three features, - 1) Their primary responsibility for domestic housework; 2) Their work is passive rather than pro-active or initiatory; and 3) Their role is identifiable by the performance of tasks associated with women's multiple roles as wife, mother and reserve farm labour. Dunne et al. (2020) provide a contemporary review of literature with a typology of women in agriculture

The report by the firm Bomel (Bomel, 2006) classified farming women's labour situation as being divisible into four categories: 1) working mainly onfarm; 2) working mainly off-farm; 3) pluriactive (both on- and off-farm); and 4) mainly working as a housewife. This division between on-farm and off-farm working activities is an important division of labour but in reality, it is a seamless workstream feeding into the same familial pot (De Rosa et al, 2019). Dunne et al. (2020) describe pluriactive women as where their identity is attributed to both on- and off-farm endeavours as opposed to the traditional farmers wife.

Bokemeier and Garkovich (1987) make a valid observation that farm people and particularly farm women have adapted to the changing social, structural and cultural contexts of their daily lives and this is an important observation because the literature and time periods examined in this review span several decades in which attitudes and values evolve and change and that one cannot compare like with like and must resort to Weberian Ideal Types, thus, from a deeper perusal of the literature, some role-based themes emerged of interest to the typology we develop here, including 1) 'The Women Farmer'; 2) 'The Farmers Wife' including the sub-categories of 'the Good Wife', and the 'Matriarch'; 3) The 'Farmers Mother' including the sub-category of the 'Dowager'; 4) The 'Farmers Daughter'; and 5) 'Farm Women', including the sub-categories of 'working women' and 'migrant workers'. It is important to note that not all of these categories in the emerging typology are discrete categories because there are temporal elements to them e.g. the category of farmers daughter is a time bound one in that once the daughter marries they generally cease to qualify as being solely daughters but become wives too and perhaps in time mothers. Indeed, a farming women's identity can encompass being the daughter, wife, mother and daughter in law of farmers. Likewise, they may become matriarchs and in time perhaps dowagers. Other emergent themes included 6) 'The Entrepreneurial Woman' and 7) 'New Entrants'.

The Women Farmer: This is the primary category of interest to this emergent typology and includes the 'female farmer-owner', 'the female tenant farmer' and the 'female farm manager'. Two crucial findings from the Bomel report (Bomel, 2006) are of importance for this study namely that very few of the women farmers and farm women interviewed for the study owned their farms or had been formally educated in farming or business subjects. Nevertheless, there

is a dearth of research into this topic which is important, and we shall return to these insights in the discussion section.

The Farmers Wife: Thematically, this is a very important category. The 'Farmers Wife' as a genre is a revered socially constructed institution.[2] Several studies have documented and reported on the topic including Abbot (1976), Symes and Marsden (1983), Gasson (1992); Kelly and Shortall (2002) and Cush, Macken-Walsh and Byrne (2018). Collectively, the basic message of such studies is that farmers wives are an integral part of the farm business and support their farmer husbands by helping out on the farm and doing necessary logistical, organisational and office work such as attending to paperwork and book-keeping chores to allow the husband to do the farm work. The studies also stress the vocational nature of such work because it is seen as a labour of love and in many instances is unpaid Women also help with seasonal work such as lambing and the harvest (Price and Evans, 2005; Smith, 2014). The majority of women in the Bomel report (2006) identify themselves as the 'farmer's wife' and rarely challenge the duties and responsibilities that this entails, even if they are more active in the farm business than they let on. According to the Bomel report (2006) the role of farmer's wife holds many dynamics; although most farming women work in the shadow of their husband, they underplay the amount and variety of work carried out on the farm. This vocational labelling (Price and Evans, 2005) and the unpaid nature of much work on farms carried out by women is of concern in that it points to a darker side of the agricultural industry whereby many women (and reputedly siblings) do not receive a wage, or if they do it is a nominal one. Indeed, it is this fiscal mechanism as a response to low margins in the food supply chain which perhaps makes the 'familial model' of farming a viable one in the long term because of its flexibility (Guarin et al. 2020). The payback is that there is an expectation that the wife and siblings get their reward on inheritance. As previously articulated because farms are passed down to sons from generation to generation to the first born second and third sons of farming families are encouraged to marry within the farming community because women from farming backgrounds have been socialised into the role and demands of the job more than non-farming women (Bomel, 2006).

Saugeres (2002a) posited the stereotypical notion of the 'Good Farmer' and in the literature there is an unstated [invisible] parallel of the 'Good Wife' (Bomel, 2006). In this gendered representation, the farmer's wife is the good little helper who supports her husband by being there and doing all the necessary odd jobs whilst holding down the home. Dunne (2020) suggests this "role" has limited formal acknowledgement, income as the wife is undifferentiated, there is limited input to daily farm decisions but that the "wife" is consulted over strategic farm decisions. The narrative in this context is that the good wife either knows her place or has been socialised into the role from childhood to the extent that it is her preferred lifestyle. The good wife pursues rural hobbies and is a mainstay of local Young Farmers club [YF], local community and the Women's Royal Institute [WRI]. This narrative of the good farmers wife also mirrors the lived experiences of the unseen and unpaid wives of male entrepreneurs who operate small firms and provide critical, yet invisible services to the business (Lewis and Massey (2011). However, one cannot apply a solely feminist framework

[2] For example, the ubiqitous farmers wife is mythologised in folksongs, verse and fairy tales.

over the lives of farm women because many engage in the patriarchal drama. Indeed, Henderson and Rannells (1987) point out that although work and leisure have generally been considered separate aspects of people's lives for many women, the integration of work and leisure has been necessary to find meaning in life. They identified five major themes: (1) the work of the women was time-consuming and never-ending, (2) childcare was a necessary work responsibility, (3) work was often infused with other social and community responsibilities, (4) work was valued and enjoyed, and (5) lack of free time or leisure was not a problem and as a result farm women found meaning and leisure through an integration of work, family, and community experiences. Saugeres (2002c) also presents an alternative discursive representation of women's bodies and how the narrative both reproduces and legitimates unequal gender relations between women and men on the farm with some farmer's wives being seen as being masculinized. One sub-category of farmer's wife is that of the Matriarch (Smith, 2014) whereby the farmer's wife as she matures becomes a familial matriarch figure in a similar manner to the entrepreneur's wife and the businessman's wife and as such dispensed advice on family and business to the wider family and farming community. Another possible descriptive label may include the 'co-preneurial couple' (Marshack, 1994) whereby both farmer and wife operate the farm as joint partners in all senses of the word i.e. as equal partners both legally and spiritually e.g. as a labour of love. In reality, this may not be a viable label in farming families.

Researching women farmers is therefore a complicated issue because of their conflation with other categories discussed herein and because there is not actually a significant literature yet on 'Women Farmers' per se. It is for this reason that it is necessary to invoke the documentary research methodology discussed above.

The Farmer's Mother: Is also an important influencer and mentor but is seldom considered in the literature. This element of the typology is important because mothers exert influence both within the family unit and the [farm] business (Smith, 2015) and this carries on throughout the lifetime of the siblings and grandchildren and into the business decision making apparatus. Thus, farmer's mothers, as the matriarch, are powerful, influential figures who cast a long shadow, particularly when it comes to important decisions such as succession and career advice. Farmers mothers act as mentors and advisors to the new generation of farmers wives and to their sons. This element of farming dynasties is under researched but is a generational and cyclical mechanism whereby the farmer and his wife at some stage must give consideration of moving out of the farmhouse to make way for the next generation. This is not always a smooth, seamless succession story. An important sub-category of this is the 'Dowager' stereotype (Smith, 2018a and b) which is a life stage label when the former farmer's wife becomes the familial figure head upon the death or incapacitation of her farming husband. This category is particularly relevant in aristocratic and landowning families (Smith, 2017; Smith, 2018; Grant and Smith, 2020). The Dowager has a crucial voice in the running of both family and business.[3]

[3] Examples of Dowagers include the Duchess of Devonshire at Chatsworth House and the late Ena Baxter of Baxter's of Speyside (see Smith, 2020).

The 'Farmers Daughter': This is an under researched role in the literature (exceptions include (O'Dowd, 1994; Haugen and Brandth, 1994; Langan and Morton, 2009). Traditionally, farmers daughters were raised and socialised into farming ways and acted as reserve workforce. They were brought up from an early age to help in the household and on the farm. They were also expected to want to marry farmers sons and start their own farming dynasty. In addition, they were encouraged to join Young Farmers groups, go to college and other networking institutions to meet eligible farmers (Shorthall, 2002f). This is obviously a generalisation as many farmers daughters left the farm to make their own way in life and a small minority were expected to take on the family farm later in life because they were only daughters or there were no eligible male siblings to inherit the farm. As a general rule if there were male sons, they went to Agricultural college. Some became rural professional and maintained a connection with the land whilst others married into local business families extending the influence of their familial interests. This is as we position a very under researched area of interest.

Farm Women: This is an interesting category because it is a 'catch all' descriptor to cover all other roles including the sub-categories of 'working women' and 'migrant workers'. The latter is an under researched phenomenon with ONS statistics suggesting that women make up 60% of seasonal migrant workers. An important feature in farming is that women rarely own their own farms (Shorthall, 2001). The direct successor of farms is most likely to be the farmer's son and therefore women seldom inherit farmland. Although this research is dated it revealed that 86% of the two-generation farms are being managed by father and son teams. Shortall (2001) highlighted that much of the work on traditional definitions of farm work focus on the contributions of the farm owner and manager, and the work of women is unrecognised (Alston, 1998). Another forgotten female stereotype is that of the 'Farm Workers Wife'. This skews the statistics of the number of women in farming, as many farm women may not be represented in the data. Other stereotypes of interest include the 'Female Migrant Worker', the 'Village Women' and 'Farm Reared Children' who are connected to the land by virtue of their employment on the land.

Entrepreneurial Farm Women: The impetus for the research stream on the entrepreneurial farmer originated in the first decade of the 21st century (McElwee, 2006, de Wolf et al, 2007, McElwee, 2008a, 2008b) and has continued unabated since then (McElwee and Smith, 2012; De Rosa, Bartoli, Charatsari and Lioutas (2020). In these works, much attention was given to the entrepreneurial skills of farmers, but no explicit reference was made to women farmers, only hinting that decisions to engage in off-farm diversification is likely to be made by farm families and women. One suggestion is that women had more transferrable skills compared to men – probably more nuanced. In earlier work (McElwee, 2006), it was suggested that women farmers and women employed in agriculture are more likely to be able to recognise the potential of off-farm diversification and have the time and energy to organise such activities while the male partner takes care of every-day farming activities. This aspect of entrepreneurial re-invigouration is worthy of further study as farm women may be ideally placed to weave together the necessary combinations of diversification, pluriactivity and innovation with the parsimonious stewardship of finite family resources that characterise the contemporary family farm business. Pluriactivity is an important element in entrepreneurial resource allocation

(Carter, 1997). Also, in earlier works on farm diversification, we suggested that choosing an appropriate 'unit of analysis' to understand diversification is important – the unit of analysis could be the individual, the business or the family or the female gender. Recent research by De Rosa et al (2020) suggests that women involved in the farming industry are more innovative than their men and also more likely to adopt new innovative methods and practices. This echoes the view of Pato (2015) but the innovations and diversifications implemented are often small-scale, incremental and bounded by geographic and demographic constraints (De Rosa et al, 2019). The rise in the numbers of new entrepreneurial farm woman may also be attributable to the increasing numbers of farmers daughters and women in general entering the industry who now choose to go to 'Agricultural College' (Smith et al, 2019) to gain a formal education in farming and farm business management. In addition, it has been suggested by Smith (2011) that the wives of farmers who are from non-farming backgrounds can bring new entrepreneurial skills and ways of thinking into the farm business.

New Entrants and sustainable farming: This is an interesting and surprising emergent category and is not covered in the literature but is evident in newspaper articles and other sources of documentary research. This is connected to the rise in the number of female students at agriculture colleges and universities. Traditionally, it was only farmer's sons who had the opportunity to attend such institutions, but more and more farmers daughters see it as a way of gaining a land-based education and qualification. Moreover, there is documentary evidence of women choosing to enter farming as a lifestyle change. A branch of the literature refers to new farming and sustainability practiced by women (See Sachs et al. 2016) utilising new green technologies and new methods such as urban farming and hydroponics and new forms of networking and ownership. Such methods offer new pathways into farming for women. One must also take cognisance of the wider literature on rural enterprise and socio-economic enterprise models.

Rural Enterprise and socio-economic enterprise models: Another area of research interest is the growth in female entrepreneurs in non-farming rural settings. Indeed, female rural enterprise and entrepreneurship and women farmers are different actors. At Harper Adams there is a WIRE project (women in rural enterprise) which encourages the growth of females in rural entrepreneurship. This element of the expanding role of women in farming is important because the doctoral work of Smith (2012) highlights that in many farming families all the siblings have entrepreneurial career paths in that they all enter farming as farmers, contractors or in some other self employed capacity and that traditionally farmers sons, daughters and wives also buy into and operate in local (non-farming) business such as hotels and shops etc. This is an area of study worthy of further research. Other work on entrepreneurial intension of agricultural students demonstrates both entrepreneurial legacy and bridging for young people born into farming or self-employed family backgrounds (Manning 2018; Manning and Parrott, 2018). It is important to note that socio-economic enterprise models are not purely economic enterprise models and multiple constructs exist within the models that can be developed to conceptualise the role of women in farming and agri-business.

As with men, there is also a darker side to the literature. The Bomel report (2006) highlights the concerning number of farmers' wives committing suicide because of occupational and financial difficulties. They report that among farm women, there were 102 suicides between 1982 and 1992, which is the highest total for wives of any occupational group. There are other identifiable gaps in the literature, namely the dearth of research into the husbands or significant others of Women Farmers and Farm Women. Likewise, there is an over engagement with the farm and the individual family as the unit of analysis (De Rosa et al, 2019) to the expense of industry wide studies or studies into farming companies and the extended supply chain. From this perusal of the literature it is apparent that women do enjoy a farm-based sphere of influence both on and off farm with a high degree of interconnectivity as conceptualised in Figure 1.

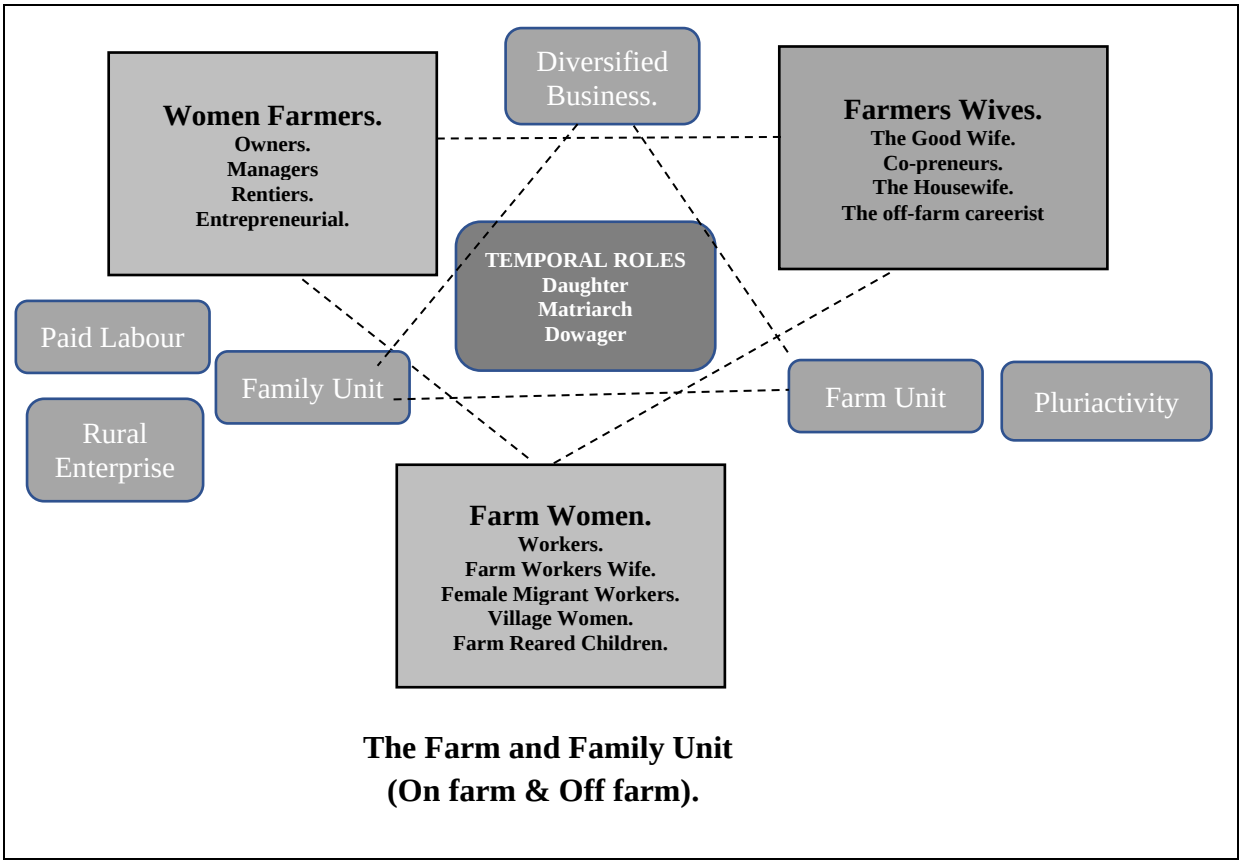

Figure 1 – Farm-based sphere of influence of women in agriculture.

The reality of the contemporary lived experience of women in agriculture in the UK is fast outstripping the extant literature and the true state of affairs can only be found in reality and in documentary sources such as newspapers, magazine articles and social media posts. From a perusal of this documentary sources it is believed from statistics from the Office of National Statistics that as of 2020 there are 23000 female farmers in the UK (ONS, 2020). A decade ago, there were virtually no recorded women farmers. A search by the authors a decade ago failed to find any significant literature on women farmers (Smith, 2010). In 2010, there were 13,000 females recorded as working in the industry. This began to rise in 2012 with changes

in technology and farming methods and the current figure indicates that the number of women in farming in the UK is rising annually.[4] There has also been a significant rise in the number of female students enrolling at the UKs Farming Colleges and Universities, many of whom have had no prior experience of farming. The number of female PhD candidates in the discipline of agriculture and agrifood is also increasing. According to Defra statistics, women now make up 28% of the British agricultural workforce. This highlights the need for a substantial study into the numbers and composition of women in farming in the UK. There are however, other demographic issues which may account for the rise in numbers of women in farming.

The agriculture industry relies on a combination of seasonal and permanent workers, mostly from EU countries but its true size remains unclear due to the dearth of official data sources and because of the use of labour supplied by Gangmasters.[5] One can gain a rough understanding by examining data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Department for Environment, the Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the National Farmers Union (NFU). The issue is compounded by the fact that there is a lag in the available data and no unified UK data-base and the statistics lean heavily towards England. The total number of workers in the UK agriculture sector = 466,200 and the number of farmers, business partners, directors and spouses = 289,900. The figures from 2016 differentiate between holders, managers and family and non-family workers.[6]

Holders: 84% were male and 40% were aged over 65 (median age = 60). Therefore 16% were women. Interestingly, 77% of female holders worked on the farm part-time or not at all compared to just over half of male holders. Compared to other farm types, pigs and poultry farms had the highest proportion of holders aged under 45. The proportion of holders aged less than 55 increased with the size of the farm.

Managers: 83% were male of which 35% were aged over 65 (median age = 58). Confusingly, 84% of managers were also the holder. The proportion of managers aged less than 55 increased with the size of the farm. Interestingly, 65% of managers had no formal agricultural education but had practical experience

Family and non-family workers: 55% of farm workers were family members of which 45% were male, compared to 79% of non-family workers. 30% of the family workforce worked on

[4] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20490789#:~:text=Figures%20from%20the%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20suggest,years%20ago%20there%20were%20virtually%20no%20women%20farmers.

[5] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/labourintheagricultureindustry/2018-02-06

[6] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/771494/FSS2013-labour-statsnotice-17jan19.pdf

the smallest farms and 14% on the largest farms. 16% of the non-family workforce worked on the smallest farms and 47% on the largest farms.

Of the 176,000 people working on agricultural holdings in England, in addition to holders and/or managers. Of these, 55% were family members [60% in the UK]. Of the 97,000 in the English family labour force, 55% were women [52% in the UK]. Of the 29,000 full-time family workers, the majority (63%) were male. Female family workers statistically work less than one quarter of a working year on the holding with almost half doing so, compared to just a third of male family workers. This mirrors the UK situation.

Women made up more than half of the family workforce across all classified farm types in England. Horticulture farms had the highest proportion of women in the family labour force (60%) and mixed crops and livestock farms the lowest (52%).

There were 176,000 people working on English agricultural holdings, in addition to holders and/or managers. Of these, 45% were non-family workers [40% in the UK]. Of the 79,000 people in the non-family labour force in England, 79% were men. For the UK 81% were men. Of the 35 thousand non-family workers who work fulltime on the holding, the majority (82%) were male. Female non-family workers were more likely to work part-time with almost two thirds doing so, compared to just over half of male non-family workers. A similar pattern was observed for the UK.

This mirrors the UK situation. Documentary sources including newspaper articles covering the topic are increasing featuring in the news streams. Examples of these are discussed below. For example, Trott, (2012) reported on the rise of numbers of women farmers. Agerholm (2019) reporting ONS figures argues that about 17% of farmers are female, up from 7% in 2007-8. ONeill, Lewis and Kale (2020) reported that nearly one in five farmers are women, with the number rising all the time and in higher education courses, women agricultural students outnumber men almost two to one, making up 64% of the 2017-2018 graduates. Newspaper articles on the topic tend to feature short biopics of the women farmers and provide reasons for this rise including changes in technology which make farming less of a physical and manual task. Nevertheless, the examples are based on the partial statistics and the women interviewed are often managers or employees.

Tentative discussions and further research.

This overview of the literature has illustrated the variety of roles, both recognised and hidden, played by women in farming and the land-based industries and the increasing uptake of women in such roles as reflected in the official statistics. Furthermore, it has demonstrated that to appreciate the impact of the roles played by women in farming these must be viewed holistically and decoupled from the metric of land ownership because simply counting the number of registered women farmers does not provide the full picture. Also, one should also consider the entrepreneurial role of women in the wider food supply chain and in the land-

based professions such as accountancy and the veterinary sciences (Treanor, Marlow and Swail, 2020). It is not simply the rise in numbers that is important, it is the new entrepreneurial energy and practices that they are injecting into the industry that is the important message to take away from this study. The rise in numbers of women entering farming may also be influenced by demographic issues such as 'the greying of farming' and the rise of new farming technologies. In relation to the former, there average age of registered male farmers in the UK is approx. 60 and many report that they have no obvious successor because they are childless or their children have expressed a wish not to enter farming. Many farmers are now working until their mid '70s' and are selling their farms to pay for living costs in retirement. There may well be more opportunities for more women to buy-into farming or enter joint farming agreements with those who own the land. There is a pressing need for a scheme to match capable new entrants with available farms. Moreover, the rise of entrepreneurship as a valid subject of study within the UKs Agricultural College and Universities (Smith, Manning and Conley, 2019) is slowly changing attitudes. New entrants may be able to utilise entrepreneurship to stake a claim on new pathways into agriculture by setting up firms that operate in the agricultural sector and funding their entry into farming by profits from the startup.

This review paper provides a general overview of the typology of women farmers in the UK - how many and where they are located and how such women are represented in the extant literature. This paper contributes by reviewing extant literature and mapping documented role models and typologies. However, reviewing the literature only takes us so far necessitating the design of future empirical studies to answer the questions raised herein. It is tempting to use a reductionist approach to understand the reasons why there are so few women responsible for registered holdings, and this is a methodology more suited to quantitative empirical research. However, this would be an overly simplistic and superficial analysis. Instead a qualitative, interpretivist study is required that highlights the currently silent, or silenced discourse.

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